



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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Baltimore Man Pleads Guilty/Is Sentenced in 2013 Columbia Homicide

A 48-year-old Baltimore man has pleaded guilty to his complicity in the 2013 murder of a Columbia man outside of his apartment. Raymond Gerod Smith pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit second-degree murder and was sentenced to 10-years in prison by Howard County Circuit Court Judge Lenore R. Gelfman this morning.

Omar Oliver, 39, of the 5200 block of Brook Way was shot multiple times around 1:30 a.m. on May 16, 2013. Police received a 911 call from Oliver's daughter who reported hearing gunshots outside. When Oliver's wife looked out the window she saw her husband on the ground, and a dark mid-size sedan driving away from the parking lot. She ran outside and performed CPR until paramedics arrived who pronounced him dead at the scene. Smith and another, man, Sheldon Lamart Richburg, 50, were charged in June 2015 following a lengthy investigation.

At Friday's plea hearing Assistant State's Attorney Jennifer Ritter told Judge Gelfman that Oliver and Smith had connections to the Cherry Hill neighborhood in South Baltimore. Oliver parked his trucking company vehicles on Reedbird Lane across from a Department of Public Works sanitation yard where Smith worked. Police detectives also discovered that in May 1999, Oliver was charged with the murder of Smith's friend, Shawn Sudler, who lived in Cherry Hill. Ritter stated that though the charges against Oliver were ultimately dropped, in the Cherry Hill neighborhood it was believe that bad feelings persisted between Smith and Oliver.

Police were also able to tie Smith to Oliver's murder after a forensic analysis of two cell phones recovered after he led Baltimore City Police on a high-speed chase on September 20, 2013, and a series of jailhouse phone calls between Smith and Richburg in 2014. Ritter also told the judge about a jailhouse informant who had been incarcerated with Smith at the Howard County Detention Center. Smith had confided in him about the homicide, telling him that a fourth man had ordered the hit on Oliver because he believed Oliver was involved with his girlfriend.

During the sentencing phase of the hearing former Howard County prosecutor, Anne Arundel County Deputy State's Attorney Claude deVastey-Jones called Smith's actions a nearly 15-year-old "grudge" which had become "pure vigilantism." Smith apologized to Oliver's family, who were seated in the courtroom, many of whom presented victim impact statements.

Sheldon Richburg will be tried for his role in Oliver's murder on April 3, 2017.

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